



# CIVIL AIR PATROL



## MENTORING: Building Our Members

CAPP 50-7 1 December 2004



## MENTORING: Building Our Members

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### DEDICATION

*Mentoring: Building our Members* is dedicated to Major General Richard L. Bowling CAP, who served as National Commander of Civil Air Patrol from August 2001 until August 2004. During that period he led CAP in the rebirth of its homeland security mission after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He did so by leading and mentoring over 64,000 volunteers performing "Missions for America."

### A MESSAGE FROM MAJ GEN BOWLING

*"During my tenure as CAP National Commander, one of the things I tried my best to do was to create an organizational culture that embraced mentoring as the foundation for the professional development of our members. Without mentoring there can be no continuity of expertise and dedication from one generation of CAP volunteers to the next. I truly hope that history shows I was successful in my sincere efforts to build a culture of mentoring in Civil Air Patrol."*

**RICHARD L. BOWLING**  
Major General, CAP  
National Commander (2001 - 2004)

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**NOTE:** *This mentoring guide focuses on how senior members may mentor one another. Senior- to-cadet mentoring and cadet-to-cadet mentoring employ similar principles. Numerous references are made to CAPR 50-17, "CAP Senior Member Professional Development Program." It should be one of the first tools referenced by a mentor.*



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# INTRODUCTION

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## WHY IS MENTORING NEEDED?

*Successful organizations mentor.* Mentoring accelerates the learning and growth, both personally and professionally, in an organization's members and employees. Mentoring relies on the age-old concept of the more experienced working one-on-one with the inexperienced. Sharing techniques, procedures, and skills is an important part of the process, but taking a personal interest in the individual's development is what separates mentoring from supervising.

Mentors:

- ▶ Enable personal and professional success.
- ▶ Assist in honing the requisite skills sets.
- ▶ Provide educational feedback.
- ▶ Are accessible through all stages of development.

Mentoring is a key ingredient for continuous improvement in members and organizations. It allows quick and efficient education and training for members. Mentoring builds peer respect, instills a team culture, and builds unit cohesion.

Good mentoring programs do many things, they:

- ▶ Develop leadership skills – for the mentor and the new member.
- ▶ Enhance organizational knowledge.
- ▶ Build team/coaching skills.
- ▶ Value every member's contribution to the organization.
- ▶ Are forward looking, providing a positive vision of participation, unit, and mission.
- ▶ Foster a participatory spirit.
- ▶ Advocate and model the CAP culture.

Why is mentoring needed? *Because mentoring taps the potential of every member, making Civil Air Patrol a better organization.*



# WHAT IS MENTORING?

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## THE VALUE OF MENTORING

Mentoring is paramount in developing well-rounded, professional, and competent leaders. The goal of mentoring in the Civil Air Patrol is to help all members reach their full potential, thereby enhancing the overall professionalism of CAP.

## Mentoring Defined

*Mentor* means a trusted counselor or guide, tutor, or coach. Mentors are helpers. Mentoring is a relationship in which a person with greater experience guides another person in personal and professional development. It is one of the broadest methods available today to develop the talent pool for today's and tomorrow's CAP. Mentoring is an informal relationship because it fosters among superiors and subordinates free communication about performance and duties, without fear of reprisal. It enhances morale and discipline and improves the operational environment while maintaining respect for authority.

## Mentoring in CAP

CAP mentoring covers a wide range of areas, such as guiding a member through the steps of the Professional Development Program; clarifying a member's understanding of aerospace education, emergency services, and cadet programs; and setting a leadership example for new members. It also includes sharing knowledge of the organization and an understanding of CAP's core values of Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect. Finally, mentoring helps members understand their role in CAP by providing a model of desired behavior.

Direct involvement of unit commanders is imperative for an effective mentoring program and the development of members. Even longtime CAP members need mentoring, especially when they accept positions of added responsibility. The commander must provide opportunities for clear performance feedback and guidance in helping the members to set realistic professional and personal goals.

## APPROACHES TO MENTORING

Mentoring relationships can take several forms. One relationship might be *highly structured* with *short-term* goals. Largely, this type of relationship is more formal with specific organizational ends.

- ▶ Examples include pairing a new senior member with a more experienced senior member during the CAP Level I Orientation process, or having the mentor explain the Professional Development Progression and Awards Chart (see CAPR 50-17, *Senior Member Professional Development Program*).

A second approach can be described as *highly structured, long-term* mentoring. In this approach a mentor might invest a year or more with a member providing formal training and counseling.

- ▶ Examples include helping a member select a specialty track from CAPR 50-17; working with the member to get the appropriate specialty guide;

partnering the member with a person expert in the specialty area; and working with the member to gain work experience throughout the on-the-job training process.

A third approach to a mentoring relationship is *informal, short-term* mentoring. This approach tends to be more spontaneous usually with no real on-going relationship.

- ▶ Assisting a new senior who wants to learn more from their new member materials is one example of informal, short-term mentoring.

Finally, some mentoring takes the form of *informal, long-term* mentoring. This involves more of a helping relationship over a lengthy period. It can be on an as-needed basis.

- ▶ For example, when facing tough challenges as a commander, the commander might seek out a respected, experienced former commander for counsel. These relationships might possibly last for several years or over a senior member's career.

- ▶ A more specific example would be guiding a new member through the promotion process using the Senior Member Progression and Awards Chart and the Professional Development Reference Library of resources from CAPR 50-17.

The optimum mentoring approach depends on several variables such as the experience level of the mentor, the experience level of the person being mentored, the communications skills of the participants, the time each person has available, and the difficulty of the challenge being faced. These factors normally indicate that it is usually a combination of mentoring approaches that produces the most effective results.

## Mentoring Today

Today's Senior Member Professional Development Program is becoming increasingly more complex, high-tech and streamlined. Many members experience the need for additional information and for understanding concepts that go beyond CAP's normal training programs. Examples include but are not limited to leading in a volunteer environment, working with difficult members, and partnering with local media. Mentors help fill in those gaps.

## WHO SHOULD BE A MENTOR?

An effective mentor must, at a minimum, have a heightened awareness or sensitivity to the needs of others, and be willing to pause and listen. It is not uncommon for a mentor to have the "heart of a teacher." Formal mentoring requires dedication and commitment both to the individual and the organization.

There may be occasions where a member's need for mentoring go beyond the capabilities, time, or resources of the assigned mentor. In such cases, referral to a more appropriate resource is necessary. It is incumbent on the mentor to recognize these limitations and offer alternatives.

Finally, the member being mentored needs to be a receptive and willing participant. The first chore of the mentor is to set the stage by establishing a mentoring "contract" with the one to be mentored. Such an agreement defines the objectives to be achieved and timelines for accomplishment. This will help ensure an effective mentoring relationship from the start.

# MENTORING TECHNIQUES

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## APPROPRIATE MENTORING BEHAVIORS

Mentors should influence the behavior of senior members in a positive way. A mentoring partnership should build expectations for success and positive outcomes, it can be a powerful force in helping the member to succeed.

1. **Provide a Sense of Vision.** New members have a greater chance of success if they are able to see how their contributions support the overall mission of CAP. Helping new members chart a vision of their goals and develop a roadmap for achieving those goals produces an active, positive contributor to the missions of CAP.

► Show a member what a successful career path looks like by thoroughly reviewing with them the Senior Member Professional Development Program Progression and Awards Chart (CAPR 50-17, Attachment 1). Emphasize the importance of the Level I Orientation Course and explain how it opens doors to participation in emergency services mission training and other CAP activities.

2. **Active Listening.** Uninterrupted listening (without assuming their problem, giving them advice, or joining them in self-pity) often helps people gain emotional relief and potentially helps them to gain insight into the challenges facing them. This type of listening involves feeding back to them what we heard them say; it means clarifying, understating, and providing an opportunity for them to fully explain their concerns. Often, just the activity of talking things through is all they need.

► The dialogue below occurred at a CAP unit and is a good example of active listening.

SENIOR MEMBER: Why is it so tough to get anywhere in CAP?

MENTOR: You sound frustrated, can I help?

SENIOR MEMBER: I just completed Level I, now I've been assigned a job. I don't know anything about the job, and I don't know who to ask.

MENTOR: It is difficult when you don't know where to begin. Maybe I can help. Did you know that CAPR 50-17, Chapter 4 has a list of specialty track study guides to help members learn about their staff positions? Let's take a look.

3. **Tactful Confrontation.** Along with empathy and respect, confrontation is needed when we find it appropriate to challenge an attitude or behavior of a member. How we do this can make a world of difference. Criticism may often be viewed as an attack or threat. It tends to elicit retreat or defensive responses, and, occasionally, a counterattack. As part of the active listening process, confrontation should be done using "I" messages (see scenario below). Try to remain in a neutral role. Restate what you thought you heard, along with potential consequences for the person's actions on himself or others, and the feelings or emotions you might be having about the person's plans. We must confront and challenge the negative behavior, **not the person.**

- ▶ For example:

SENIOR MEMBER: “I’m going to tell the commander to shove it! He can’t tell me what to do. I’m a volunteer!”

MENTOR: “ I hear the anger in your voice, John, and I’m concerned. That type of action could undermine your relationship with the commander and could be counterproductive to your cause and the organization.”

Once he or she is confronted, it is important to listen as the member reaches an unemotional approach to the problem.

**4. Providing Information.** Many times all that the member needs is information. Sharing this information when needed can be productive. Fear of the unknown, due to a lack of information, creates stress. Sharing accurate information regularly helps the member understand the organization and decreases stress that evolves from uncertainty.

- ▶ Share information from CAPR 50-17 on the Professional Development Library highlighted in paragraph 2-2. The library is an excellent resource for members to gain foundational information to handle issues relating to membership responsibilities and professional development.

**5. Empowering.** Often the very act of empowering a member, the delegating of authority, or giving of permission, is a valid form of mentoring. These actions send a validating message of confidence in the member’s ability to handle the challenge. With empowering comes the obligation for continued monitoring to ensure new members reach their full potential.

**6. Encouraging.** Timely encouragement is an effective tool of the successful mentor. Currently, only about 22% of our senior members complete Level II of the Senior Member Professional Development Program; continuous progression is vital to the health of CAP. A positive mentor encourages members to make it to the next higher level of professional development.

- ▶ Encourage the member by sharing challenges that others have overcome to make it to the next level, such as completing the CAP Senior Officer Correspondence Course.

**7. Teaching.** Teaching techniques are an effective mentoring tool in a senior-to-senior or senior-to-cadet relationship. Even though teaching is mostly associated with helping a member in a technical area, teaching techniques are equally appropriate in the leadership and professional development arena. The best teachers are also “coaches.”

- ▶ Provide continuing education opportunities during unit meetings such as teaching a member the procedures outlined in CAPR 50-17, Chapter 2, to apply for participation in a CAP special activity.

## INAPPROPRIATE MENTORING BEHAVIORS

To be an effective mentor, it is important to know what behaviors are inappropriate and unlikely to succeed, as well as to understand the best practices.

**1. Criticism.** Criticism, even when it is offered as “friendly” or “constructive,” is seldom taken in a positive way. It tends to be a form of judgmental behavior, which threatens self-esteem and often elicits defense

## COMMANDERS & MENTORING

mechanisms. Criticism tends to be interpreted by the one receiving it as meaning he or she has failed or done something bad or wrong. A positive approach to leadership is crucial to the success of a volunteer organization. Criticism undermines positive leadership and team building.

2. **Giving advice.** Giving advice, without the person being mentored asking for it, is almost always based on the supposition that the giver has superior knowledge or greater wisdom and insight into someone else's problems. The mentor who gives advice does not have to live with the consequences of that advice. With personal issues, active listening is a better technique for the mentor. Listen, and feed back what was said, including the underlying feelings or emotions that were heard. This validates an understanding of the issues and allows the one being mentored to work toward their own solution. Our members will grow more by learning problem-solving skills with the mentor's encouragement.

3. **Rescuing.** Some members may present themselves as "victims" and seem to perpetuate repetitive patterns of failure, inadequacy, and crisis. When a member shows this behavior, rescuing the member or attempting to take over their problems will not be helpful in the long term. Short-term crisis intervention, as alluded to earlier, is appropriate; however, continual patterns of rescuing complicates the mentor's challenge. This is sometimes referred to as "enabling." When this tends to be a repetitive pattern and the mentor begins to feel annoyed, anxious, or suspicious. These negative feelings serve as a warning that something is amiss. If so, then it's time to disengage.

Unit commanders are responsible for establishing mentoring partnerships in their squadron. The most common style of mentoring, informal and short-term, is relatively easy to initiate. Below are some examples about how to establish this type of mentoring.

1. The unit commander should begin with an awareness session with those that express interest in becoming a mentor. The unit commander may call upon an experienced adult to discuss this guide with the potential mentors. This could be a group effort or one-on-one. The purpose of the awareness meeting is to discuss the potential pitfalls and rewards of becoming a mentor.

2. The unit commander should appoint an experienced senior member to mentor a senior member recruit. This authority may be delegated. The purpose here is to provide the new recruit with a person that would be available to answer any questions and to guide the recruit towards fulfillment of his or her membership responsibilities.

The mentor should assist the recruit in understanding the program materials and organization. This relationship should last longer than just one meeting, otherwise this mentor would be acting more like a "sponsor." The mentor, in this example, will need to guide the recruit through the initial stages of membership and should help the new member prepare for the Level I Orientation Course in the Senior Member Professional Development Program.

3. In addition to mentoring recruits, the unit commander should identify senior members to serve as professional development mentors. The purpose here is to guide the members towards mastery of the organizational structure, the professional development program, and technical specialties. This relationship should last longer than just one course or one requirement for promotion, otherwise the mentor would be functioning more like a “substitute teacher.”

The tutoring relationship should last for as long as the member takes to complete Level I (about 3 to 6 months) and/or Level II (another 10 months to 2 years) of the professional development program. One goal should be that at the conclusion of the process the mentored member should be ready to become a mentor. Mentoring the members, in the example explained above, may be accomplished through a variety of methods, to include:

- ▶ The mentor works one-on-one in reviewing the specialty track study guide for their specialty and develops an action plan to master the job.
- ▶ The mentor guides the member through the promotion process.
- ▶ The mentor works with the member to determine the most effective place to serve in the organization, while encouraging the member to pursue goals they identify as important to them in CAP.

4. The unit commander should appoint senior members serving in functional staff positions (such as administrative officer, public affairs officer, aerospace education officer, etc.) to also act as mentors to the seniors selecting those specialty tracks. The members studying their specialty should learn from their more experienced counterparts the duties of the staff positions as they work together. This relationship should last for as long as the member desires to perform the job function, otherwise it is simply minimal “on-the-job training.”

Mentoring, in this example cited above, involves a real desire to help the member master the position.

## CONCLUSION

The successful mentor will have a good grasp of CAP’s norms, values, and procedures. This knowledge is helpful in guiding the member in meeting his or her performance objectives. But, there are also personal characteristics that contribute to being an effective mentor:

- ▶ Listen.
- ▶ Maintain confidentiality.
- ▶ Value the member as a person.
- ▶ Provide constructive, non-abrasive feedback.
- ▶ Focus on the member’s needs.
- ▶ Help the member solve the problem for himself or herself.

After receiving the tutoring of a good mentor, the member will be better able to:

- ▶ Grasp the content of the materials pertaining to the Senior Member Professional Development Program.
- ▶ Assume greater responsibility.
- ▶ Be receptive to constructive feedback.
- ▶ Make better decisions.
- ▶ Become a mentor to others.

Unit leaders establish the tone for effective mentoring partnerships by providing a vision for successful mentoring. When done appropriately, mentoring can be a positive experience for the mentor and member alike. Mentoring contributes significantly to the development of Civil Air Patrol's most valuable resource, its members.



# MENTORING & CAP'S CORE VALUES

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## MENTORING = BUILDING OUR MEMBERS

The connection between the concept of mentoring, and the core values that all CAP members hold dear is clear. That is, we live by four simple values: Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence, and Respect.

These core values are woven into the fabric of CAP's entire Professional Development Program. Core Values and ethical leadership are the cornerstones that make Civil Air Patrol what it is. But, it takes time to truly assimilate these values personally, to have them become a genuine part of our being, and our organization. Mentors guide the acceptance and the personalization of CAP's Core Values. To promote the values, a mentor must be able to define CAP's Core Values in practical terms and everyday language.

*Integrity* is about honesty. Most people have the courage and personal responsibility to make decisions and be held accountable for them. But occasionally, people make poor choices. Integrity simply means that you do what is right, even when no one is looking. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. summed it up when he said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy." Members who continually demonstrate the highest standards of self-discipline are mentoring to all who witness their actions.

*Volunteer service* does not deny one's self-interest. The true mentor constantly reinforces this ideal by showing others how to adapt personal goals to organizational goals. A mentor leads by example by not pursuing self-interests and personal agendas. The best interest of Civil Air Patrol is an effective mentor's prime motivation.

*Excellence* is Civil Air Patrol's hallmark as it meets the challenges in performing missions for America. Simply put, excellence means we have an obligation to perform to the highest standards, both professionally and personally. Through modeling, coaching, and counseling, the effective mentor guides fellow members in developing a personal road-map to achieve CAP's standards of excellence.

*Respect* for the value of each member's contribution to CAP is at the foundation of the organization. The mentor at the local unit models respect by valuing all members: their ideas, their talents, and their diverse experience. In practice, a good technique is to remember what it was like as a new, inexperienced member, and anticipate the new member's issues and needs, taking proactive steps to clear the road ahead.

Each member making these Core Values their own is crucial to a healthy, vibrant, professional Civil Air Patrol. The mentor is the key to helping members

## HONORING OUR MENTORS

personalize those values. The success of the mentor will manifest itself when effective leaders rise out of the membership and successfully overcome the new challenges that Civil Air Patrol will face.

Anyone who benefits from a mentor may thank that individual for their service. See Attachment 2 for an optional certificate, *Mentoring Award* (CAPC 9), that any CAP member may present to their mentor as a gesture of thanks. The act of honoring a mentor models a positive attitude, and therefore is itself a form of mentoring that touches all who witness the public expression of appreciation.



# ▶ Pay it *forward.*

## Be a **mentor.** ▶▶▶

Below is a list of some suggested activities that mentors can use in developing their relationship with the members in their trust. This list is not all inclusive; nor are the types of activities limited to professional development or technical training. As you grow your local mentoring program, you will begin to see how the mentoring principles shown in this guide apply to all CAP activities. The most important thing is that the difference between helping and mentoring is attitude. Mentoring is more than showing someone what to do, mentoring is a mindset.

Help a member transferring into your unit get acclimated to their new surroundings.

*Guide a member through the process of selecting a specialty track, and help them find the resources with which to learn their new job.*

**Work with a member to pass the CAP Observer Course.**

Help a member learn the requirements for promotion and help them formulate an action plan to gain their next rank. For example, if you are a major, guide a lieutenant through the process of becoming a captain.

If you've been to a Region Staff College or National Staff College, encourage an eligible member in your unit to go. Share with them your experiences from the course, and how you apply what you learned during the course to your duties.



**Guide a member through the process of getting the Yeager Award.**



*Work with a member to pass the CAP Safety Officer Course.*



**Work with a member to complete the CAP Scanner Course.**



*Show a new member how to properly wear their CAP uniform.*



Help a member find out how to apply for a CAP scholarship.

If you are a primary staff officer and gain an assistant, help the member learn the intricacies of their new job.



Work with a member to pass any AFIADL course.



Guide a new senior member through the Level I orientation process, answering questions about course content, helping them see how what they learned in Level I applies at the local unit while shepherding them through the process of acclimating to the unit.

Take a new member to a wing or region conference.



Show a new member how to get the most out of the CAP web site.

Work with a member to pass AFIADL-13, CAP Senior Officer Course.

Guide a member through the process of getting Emergency Services qualified.

Help a senior cadet transition to senior member status, and guide them through the first few months of senior membership. Help them form new relationships with the cadets they now serve over, and the senior members they now serve with.



If you've graduated from a Squadron Leadership School or Corporate Learning Course, take a member from your unit to a course and share your positive experiences from your course (do not compare or criticize the course). Share with them how you used what you learned at the course in doing your job.



If you are a unit commander, groom shining members to become your replacement. For example, take them to the Unit Commanders Course, talk to them about your experiences, explain to them not only what decisions you make, but why you made them, etc.



**CIVIL AIR PATROL United States Air Force Auxiliary**



# MENTORING AWARD

Mentoring is a form of personal leadership that is important to the continued growth of Civil Air Patrol and its members.

Thank you

*Integrity*

*Volunteer Service*

*Excellence*

*Respect*

for being my mentor. To honor your efforts, I promise to apply what I have learned and to follow your superb example by one day serving as a mentor myself, thereby helping other volunteers serve America through Civil Air Patrol.

Awarded this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presented By